

Lincoln's Brother Leaders Who Remember Him Well

BY JOHN ELPRETH WATKINS.
To our generation, from its viewpoint three years beyond his century milestone, Lincoln appears far away in the background of history. To those of us who thus perceive him faintly, through the thickening mist of time, it is surprising to discover when we come to count them—how many of his brother leaders still live among us, defying the ravages of time.

Two Ante-Bellum Congressmen.

The boast of having served in Congress before Lincoln was President, would be received from a living man with little credence today. And yet there dwell in the great metropolis two men who can establish this record. These are General Roger A. Pryor and General Daniel E. Sickles. Having served as one of our envoys to Greece back in the administration of Pierce, Roger A. Pryor entered Congress from Virginia during the regime of Buchanan, and in the campaign which first brought Lincoln to the White House he was re-elected to another congressional term, with an account of his alignment with the Confederate cause, he did not serve.

He knew Lincoln, who released him from the Federal prison at Petersburg, and after thus regaining his liberty he called at the White House to plead for the life of a brother officer under sentence of death as a Confederate spy. His eighty-fourth birthday will fall next midsummer.

General Sickles's Recollections.

The other surviving ante-bellum Congressman, General Sickles, is in his eighty-seventh year, having first seen the light away back yonder in the days when Quincy Adams was President. While he dwelt in the White House and John Young was Governor of New York, fifty-five years ago more than a lifetime for the great majority of us, he was in the New York Legislature fighting the Whigs.

President Pierce, who came before Buchanan, sent him to London as our secretary of legation, and before President Grant he served in the army. Recalling their interview, he said:

"When I saw the President and told him that I wanted to help Lincoln said to me: 'Sickles, I'm glad you've come to me, and I want to have every Democrat of prominence who wants to have this country from destruction right up in the front line of the fighting. I don't want you to serve as a private. I believe in pushing the Democrats who want to fight right up to the head, where everybody can take a lesson from them. You have been a leader in New York Democratic politics. If you have kept your end up at that game, surely you will go to take command of men in the field. Go on and raise your regiment and you shall be a brigadier-general.'"

Sickles went ahead and organized five regiments of his constituents, and Lincoln, true to his word, put a star on his shoulder straps, and in the second year of the war he was a major-general. He is the senior surviving commander of the Civil War, and in point of service is the senior surviving official of our three branches of government.

Senator Chaplain Under Lincoln.
But up in Orange, N. J., dwells a venerable sage, and another of those contemporaries of Lincoln, who, in age, outranks General Sickles. This is the Methodist bishop, Thomas Bowman, now in his ninety-fifth year, who was chaplain of the national Senate while Lincoln was President, and whom Lincoln was in the White House when this divine was born. He received his diploma the year in which Victoria was crowned, and he was preaching in Baltimore during the administration of Van Buren. He has been a licensed preacher for seventy-three years.

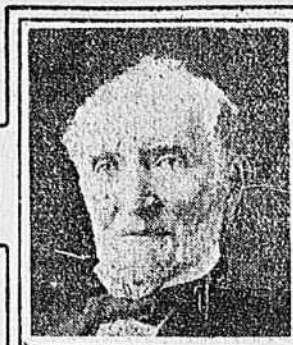
We think of all the ante-bellum Governors as having passed beyond, but one of those still survives—William Sprague, he who married the fascinating Kate Chase, daughter of Lincoln's secretary of the treasury, and whom that President, president Chief Justice, that same champion, which first elected Lincoln to the presidency returned William Sprague to the Governor's chair in Rhode Island, and he came to Washington with the first troops volunteering from "Little Rhodey." At-



ANDREW D. WHITE.



ROGER A. PRYOR.



JOSEPH G. CANNON.



GENERAL HORACE PORTER.



GENERAL DANIEL E. SICKLES.



CHAUNCEY M. DEPEW.



SENATOR CULLOM.

ter having been thrice elected executive of his State, he returned to Washington as United States Senator in 1868, and the same year married Salmon P. Chase's daughter. After serving twelve years in the upper house of Congress, he retired to his home in Narragansett, where he now lives with his second wife. Last autumn he commenced to count off his fifth score of years.

Andrew D. White's Recollections.

Still another ante-bellum official with us is a scholarly gentleman whom President Pierce appointed attaché in our legation at St. Petersburg about the same time that he sent Daniel Sickles to London. This distinguished publicist, Andrew D. White, better known in our day as the president of Cornell University and our ambassador to several foreign courts, thus began his diplomatic service fifty-eight years ago. He retains a vivid mental picture of Lincoln, obtained at the first meeting with the war President at the White House, just after the Baltimore convention of 1864, at which he had just voted for the former's re-nomination.

Mr. White and his party had been in the White House about ten minutes when a young man held open a door to admit what he describes as "a tall ungainly man, dressed in a rather dusty suit of black."

"My first impression," he says, "was that this was some rural tourist who had straggled into the place; for, really, he seemed less at home there than any other person present, and looked about for an instant as if in doubt where he should go; but presently he turned toward our group and then I saw that it was the President."

Impressed by His Melancholy.

"As he came toward us in a sort of awkward, pertentive manner, his face seemed to me one of the saddest I had ever seen, and when he had reached us he held out his hand to the first stranger, then to the second, and so on, all with the air of a melancholy automaton. But suddenly some one in the company said something which amused him, and instantly there came in his face a most marvelous transformation. I have never seen anything like it in any other human being. His features were lighted, his eyes radiant. He responded to sundry remarks humorously, though dryly, and thenceforth was cordial and hearty."

Mr. White was one of the pallbearers chosen by the New York Senate to carry the murdered President's body while it was in Albany, where it lay in state during its return to Springfield. His colleagues in the State Senate chose him also to pronounce an oration over the remains.

"When the coffin was opened," he further recalls, "and we were allowed to take one last look at Lincoln's face,

it impressed me as having the same melancholy expression which I had seen upon it when he entered the East Room at the White House. In its quiet sadness there seemed to have been no change."

Lincoln's Protege Now Senator.

Of living leaders who worked shoulder to shoulder with Lincoln, he who was nearest him is Senator Shelby M. Cullom, of Illinois. His father was a friend and warm admirer of Lincoln's when the latter was a poor country lawyer, and among the Senator's earliest childhood recollections is his parents advising his neighbors to employ the former, rail-splitter for important law work. After studying the then obscure Lincoln defend a man for murder young Cullom chose him as his ideal of a great man, and when he decided to emulate his ideal and give up farm work for the law, he went to Springfield to consult the rising young attorney, who had been placed in a neighbor's law office as a student clerk. Thus Cullom became the protegee of Lincoln, who wanted to take him in his own office, but was hindered by his current duties from giving him the attention which he thought he deserved. A few years later, when Cullom was selected to help Lincoln defend a murder case, he enjoyed one of the proudest moments of his life.

"I do not know whether the defendant was guilty or not, but I do know that he was acquitted," the Senator recalls. "During my life I have been acquainted with very many able lawyers, and I have no hesitation in saying that Lincoln was the greatest trial lawyer I ever knew. When he was sure he was right his strength and re-

sourcefulness were well-nigh irresistible. In the courtroom he was at home, and the lawyers to such an extent that he would state the case of the opposite side as fairly as the opposing counsel could do it; he would then disclose his client's case so strongly, with such honesty and candor, that the judge and jury would be almost convinced at once in advance of the testimony."

Studied German With Lincoln.

The future senator and future President were members of the same German class in these days, and he recalls that the latter was its only member who mastered the course. When Lincoln went anywhere to make a political address his protegee and admirer went along, and thus he heard the former's most important speeches, beginning with that before the Wang convention of '46, which nominated him for Congress, and including that before the Republican convention of '68, when he uttered the words: "A house divided against itself cannot stand. This government cannot permanently endure half slave and half free." He listened to many of the Lincoln-Longwell debates.

No stock in the oft-repeated stories of Lincoln's domestic inclinations is taken by the Senator.

"I often visited at his home," says he, "and so far as my observation went I do not hesitate to say that not the slightest countenance should be given to the many false stories that have from time to time appeared, manufactured largely by those who desired to write something new and sensational."

Lincoln was seen in all of his moods by Senator Cullom, and although at times he displayed the ungainliness often described, when the occasion demanded he arose to a superior dignity and nobility.

One of his most vivid recollections of Lincoln is his standing over the coffin of his dead boy, Willie, in the East Room, with lips quivering and tears pouring down his cheeks.

During the various fortunes of war Mr. Cullom visited the President at the White House from time to time, and also at the Soldiers' Home, when he lived there to escape the downtown heat. He overheard the interview between Lincoln and Chase, during which the latter made his acknowledgment for his appointment as Chief Justice.

The last time he saw the President alive was about three weeks before his assassination, when he warned him of his peril, but received only the reply from Lincoln that he must take his chances, that he could not live in an iron box and do his duty.

Meeting the funeral train of the murdered President at Harrisburg, Mr. Cullom remained aboard throughout the long twelve-day circuit of the Northern cities, and with the exception of E. F. Leonard, Senator Cullom believes he is the sole survivor of the funeral party which accompanied the Lincoln remains on that long journey to Springfield.

Mr. Cullom's Memories.
"Uncle Joe" Cannon also has some vivid recollections of Lincoln, of whose time he was State's attorney in Illinois, while Cullom was part of the time in the Legislature. The former speaker first met Lincoln at Decatur, Ill., the day before the State convention was held there to elect delegates to the first national convention which nominated Lincoln for President. Mr. Cannon saw the future President at the telegraph office, and when some one referred to his candidature he said, "I'm most tired of a candidate to be elected, but not enough of one to stay away." The next day "Uncle Joe" saw two of the original Lincoln rails carried into the convention, and the crowd yelped for the man who had split them, and he saw the giant form of Illinois' favorite son passed from home to home over a solid mass of people from the rear of the convention to the platform.

The last time Mr. Cannon saw Lincoln was on a train in Illinois just prior to his inauguration. After he had spoken with the President-elect he heard a man ask the question: "Are you going down to see your mother?" To which Lincoln replied: "I'm going to spend a day visiting her before I go to Washington to take the oath of office." This candidate referred to his stepmother, for whom he showed great love and attention throughout his life.

As Depew Recalls Him.
Another political leader of Lincoln's day, still very much alive, is Chauncey M. Depew, who recalls the war President thus:

"I remember as if it were yesterday an afternoon with Mr. Lincoln. I was but a boy, though Secretary of New York State. Horatio Seymour was the Democratic Governor, and the Legislature was Republican. The soldiers' vote was to be obtained. The Republican Legislature would not trust the Governor, and it devolved upon me the duty of collecting the soldiers' vote."

Mr. Lincoln looked up as I pressed my way through the crowd in his reception room and said: "Well, Depew, what can I do for you?" I said: "Mr. President, I do not want anything; I am in Washington on a mission from our State to get out from the soldiers' vote."

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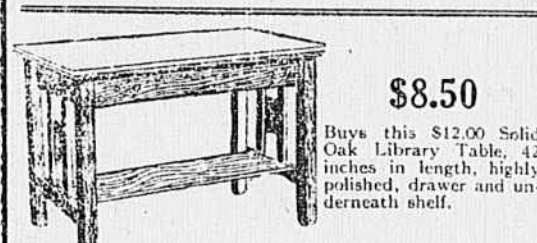


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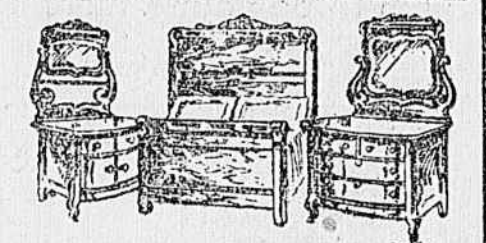


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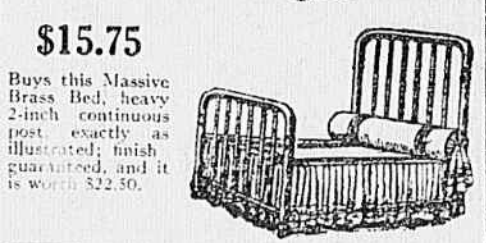


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our New York soldiers vote and I simply called to pay my respects." He said: "It is so rare that any one comes here who wants nothing; please wait and I will get rid of these people in a few minutes."

"The room was soon emptied, the faithful Jerry was guarding the door, and on the lounge the tired President was rocking to and fro, holding his long knees in his arms and telling story after story to relieve his mind, and he said: 'Depew, they say I tell a great many stories. I think I do. They say I lower the dignity of the presidential office by these broad anecdotes. Possibly that is true. But I have found in the course of a long experience that the plain people of the country, take them as they are, are more easily reached and influenced and argued with through the medium of a humorous illustration than in any other way.'"

Characteristic Lincoln Story.
And this very point is illustrated by General Horace Porter, who says of Lincoln:

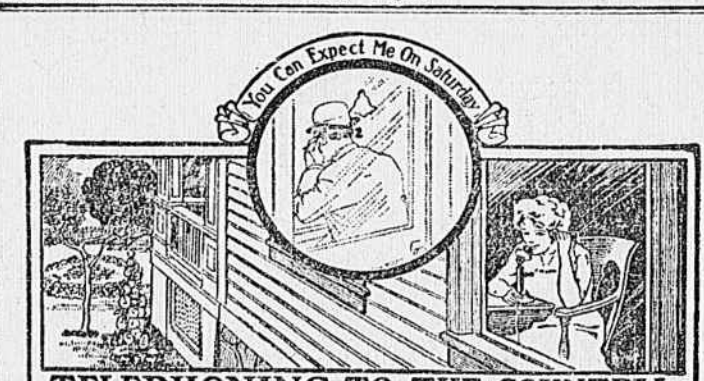
"He did not tell a story for the sake of anecdote, but to point a moral, to clinch a fact. I do not know a more apt illustration than that which fell from his lips the last time I ever heard him converse. We were discussing the subject of England's assistance to the South and how, after the collapse of the Confederacy, England did find she had aided it but

little, and only injured herself. He said:

"That reminds me of a barber in Sangamon county. He had just gone to bed when a stranger said he must be shaved—that he had a four-day beard and was going to a ball, and that the barber must come off. Well, the barber reluctantly got up and dressed and seated the man in a chair with a back so low that every time he bore down on him he came near dislocating his victim's neck. He began by lathering his face, including his nose, eyes and ears; stropped his razor on his boot and then made a drive at the man's countenance as if he had practiced mowing a stubble field. He made a bold swish across the right cheek,

carrying away the beard, a pimple and two warts. The man's cheeks were so hollow that the barber could not get down into the valleys with the razor and the ingenious idea occurred to him to stick his finger in the man's mouth and press out the cheeks. Finally he cut through the cheek and into his own finger. He pulled the finger out of the man's mouth, snapped the blood off it, glared at him, and said: 'There, you lantern-jawed cuss, you've made me cut my finger!'

"Now," said Mr. Lincoln, "England will find that she got the South into a pretty bad scrape by trying to administer to her, and in the end she will find she has only cut her own finger."



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